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Gun Curb Bill Gets Support In Test Votes

A series of key test votes in the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday drew solid support for the Administration's gun control bill, though final approval was held up at the request of opponents.

The test votes came after Sen. Roman L. Hruska (R-Neb.) said he wanted a lengthy discussion of all substitute proposals, including his plan to exempt rifles and shotguns from any new controls, before the Committee took action at the closed-door session.

To find out where the votes were, Sen. George A. Smathers (D-Fla.) offered a motion to table the entire bill, which was defeated 13 to 1. Only Chairman James O. Eastland (D-Miss.) voted to drop the bill entirely.

Similar tests on various controversial provsions of the bill also were beaten down handily, supporters reported, concluding that final approval of the bill is only a matter of time.

Sen. Thomas J. Dodd (D-Conn.), sponsor of the bill, and Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D-Mass.), who has been pressing hard for its passage, both said they are confident that the Committee will approve checks on interstate mail-order sales of both long guns and hand guns, as well as controls on heavy weapons.

The Dodd bill would require mail-order purchasers of rifles and shotguns to submit affidavits that could be reviewed by law enforcement officials before the sales are completed. All interstate mail-order sales of handguns would be prohibited.

At a day-long meeting slated for next week, Hruska will call for a weaker measure that would allow gun sales with affidavits and permit rifle and shotgun traffic to continue unchanged.

The meeting yesterday was the third attempt to get the Dodd bill reported out of Committee. Opponents are hoping that adjournment will kill the measure as it has in previous Congresses.